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Rev. George A. Gordon, D.D.

HUMANISM IN NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY.
ASPECTS OF THE INFINITE MYSTERY.
REVELATION AND THE IDEAL.
RELIGION AND MIRACLE.
THROUGH MAN TO GOD.
ULTIMATE CONCEPTIONS OF FAITH.
THE NEW EPOCH FOR FAITH.
THE WITNESS TO IMMORTALITY IN LITERATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND LIFE.
THE CHRIST OF TO-DAY.
IMMORTALITY AND THE NEW THEODICY.

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HUMANISM IN NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

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HUMANISM IN NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

BY

GEORGE A. GORDON

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WITH THE DEEPEST RESPECT
I INSCRIBE
THIS VOLUME TO TWO FRIENDS
DOCTOR WILLISTON WALKER
AND
DOCTOR JOHN WRIGHT BUCKHAM
SCHOLARS WHO INHERIT
VENERATE AND LIFT INTO UNIVERSAL RELATIONS
THE GREAT NEW ENGLAND TRADITIONS

NOTE

THE Essay here published appeared originally in the *Harvard Theological Review*, April, 1907. For permission to republish it sincere thanks are extended to the editors of the *Review*.

The title has been changed from "The Collapse of the New England Theology," to "Humanism in New England Theology," because the former title indicated only the passing of a historic system of thought, while indicating not at all the permanent ideas in that system. For the purposes of the article it seemed best to take the title from Dr. Foster's book, then under review. The new title emphasizes what the writer conceives to be the fundamental principle of every attempt to interpret the mystery of the Infinite. Fidelity to this principle at its best — the interpretation of the Eternal through the ideal man — would appear to

be the final test of the worth of every scheme of thought in the service of Christian faith.

In this tercentennial year of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, attention is sure to be drawn to the great succession of New England divines, and it is hoped that this little book may assist in the discovery of what was of passing interest in their thought, and of that which must abide so long as faith in the God and Father of Jesus shall abide. A few hints are given of the heroic character of these men, their intellectual strength and charm — a subject that deserves an independent treatment.

Some slight additions have been made to the Essay as it at first appeared; there are also some slight omissions. In other respects the discussion is unchanged.

GEORGE A. GORDON

January 2, 1920

HUMANISM IN NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

HUMANISM IN NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

I

THERE are in general two forms of humanism, the historical and the philosophical. Historical humanism, unless otherwise guarded, is understood to cover the revival of interest in the Greek and Roman classics, and the devotion to the product of human genius in literature and in art in Europe during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. To be sure, this sense of historical humanism is arbitrary. Any view taken of human nature among any people in any period of time is a form of historical humanism. In this sense of the word we have, to mention only leading races, Hebrew, Greek, Roman, patristic,

mediæval, Puritan, and present-day forms of humanism.

Philosophical humanism is something different. It is the doctrine which finds, whether with or without clear intention, in human personality the key to the character of the universe. Popular forms of religion illustrate the three ways in which this humanistic principle is applied. The worship of the sun is common in the history of certain peoples. Here the direct principle is the interpretation of the Divine through Nature; but the indirect principle is humanistic. The sun is all-seeing, an eye filled with omniscience; the human mind has taken possession of it and moulded it to its own uses. Besides, when reflection arrives, it is seen that Nature in any of her great forms is known only as force, that force is known only as will. In the interpretation of the Divine through Nature, while the direct principle is sub-human, the indirect principle is a phase of human personality. In the

study of Egyptian monuments one is met with the most elaborate attempt to interpret the Divine through animal life. The hawk, the snake, the crocodile are a few of the great variety of animal forms employed in this interpretation. Here the direct principle is again sub-human, but the indirect is another phase of the human personality; for only through the consciousness of life is man able to enter the vast region of animal vitality and power. In polytheism, pantheism, and theism the human personality is used, in one way or another, as the guiding principle. The many gods of Greece or Rome are a reflection of the many human beings by whom the universe is construed. The absolute divinity of the whole and all its parts is but the infinite shadow of a human life supposed to be complete or fated to be as it is. The one God of the monotheistic world is the image of the one great human soul that is fit to govern all other human souls. Facts, real or apparent, in each case guide

in the application of the principle. Jesus and his gospel come from the Eternal, and in the name of this the supreme soul and its fullness of honor and love, we turn, look back, and see through Him the Infinite Father.

The general conclusion here is that every positive view of the universe is attained on the humanistic principle; the special conclusion is that every form of theism is at the same time a form of humanism. Still further, the two great types of theism, the Individual God and the Social God, the Unitarian Deity and the Trinitarian Deity, are the issue of two different forms of the humanistic principle. For one type, the Unitarian, the individual man is the instrument of interpretation; for the other type, the Trinitarian, man the social being is the guide. The New England theology sets forth the Trinitarian type of theism. It is theological humanism of a certain kind. The type is bound to endure; the form in

which it lived is gone. A criticism of the New England theology, first upon more obvious grounds, and then upon humanistic grounds, is therefore in order. It is here undertaken in the interest of the permanent type which the writer believes that theology set.

What is the New England theology? In a general way it is the philosophy of the Christian faith originating with Augustine, reduced to severe order and expounded with energy and consistency by John Calvin, revived by Jonathan Edwards, and by him and his successors related to the speculative questions and religious conditions of a new land and a new people. From first to last it consisted in five main determinations, the old five points of Calvinism slightly rearranged: the sovereignty of God, the depravity of man, the atonement for sin made by Jesus Christ, the irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit, and the perseverance of believers in Christ. The system began with the

Divine sovereignty, with the predestination of all events, with a world fallen, yet under the purpose of God, and with a scheme of salvation limited to a certain predetermined number, and exclusive of or indifferent to the rest of mankind. Nathaniel W. Taylor here speaks for the entire school. In his discussion of the doctrine of election he remarks: "The simple matter of fact which I would state, and which constitutes the entire doctrine of election, is this: that God has eternally proposed to renew, and sanctify, and save a part only of mankind." The perseverance of true believers must be read in the light of the irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit; this again must be traced, through the sacrifice of Christ, back to the elective decree of the Most High, and still further this determination to save only a part of mankind must be seen to be one phase of God's absolute sovereignty in the universe.

Upon this general framework of belief all

the New England theologians were agreed. For them there were but two systems of theology, the Calvinistic and the Arminian, and for the latter they had, in general and in particular, something very like contempt. So far as I have been able to search their writings, no one of these thinkers has defined the science of theology. They did not conceive definition to be necessary. They had absorbed from childhood the Calvinistic scheme; it took tremendous, almost exclusive, hold of their intellect. When they studied the Bible it seemed to look into their souls nearly from every page, and the history of this sad world was the conclusive witness to the truth of its doctrine concerning man. Jonathan Edwards, the elder and the younger, Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, Nathanael Emmons, Nathaniel W. Taylor, and Edwards A. Park — the great masters of the school — were at one here. Horace Bushnell is the pioneer of a new movement, and therefore does not in this

connection concern us. Samuel Harris was a deep thinker in theology, and an eminent teacher; but he too had outgrown the old New England categories. Professor Park was the last of the New England theologians. These thinkers without exception held to the sovereignty of God, whether construed as including or as not including the fall; they held to the innate depravity of mankind — they traced this universal condition of the race to the sin of the first man, however they may have differed with older thinkers or among themselves in the account given of the relation of the individual to Adam; they were agreed that without atonement there is no forgiveness of sin, and that this necessary atonement had been made by Jesus Christ; they were united in the belief that the Holy Spirit is essential to the conversion and regeneration of man — that till the Spirit's influence descends upon him, man is helpless in the presence of his moral obligation, that when the Divine

grace comes it is irresistible, and that its dispensation is ruled, not by the forlorn condition of a humanity lying in wickedness, but by the Divine decree; and they were unanimous in their conviction that true believers in Jesus Christ will persevere to the end and be saved with an everlasting salvation. Upon this last point great emphasis was placed. It represented the final issue of the aboriginal sovereign decree; it was held with a vigor answering to the certainty of that decree; and hence any hesitation here was regarded as a reflection upon the Supreme honor and power. Oliver Cromwell, in his question, 'Does once a Christian mean always a Christian?' represents the seriousness of the entire New England school upon this subject. A certain minister once complained to President Sparks, of Harvard, that his church was greatly distressed over the perseverance of the saints; to whom President Sparks replied in the modern spirit, but at the same

time failing in insight into the Puritan character, 'Our trouble here is with the perseverance of the sinners.' It is a sign of the distance we have come that the famous remark of Dr. Williams, of Providence, upon this subject is cherished as a supreme example of humor in theological debate. It was, however, far enough from this character in the mind of Dr. Williams. Meeting one day a preacher of Arminian opinions and demanding of him a proof-text for the monstrous belief that a soul once converted to God could fall away and be lost forever, and receiving in answer the citation of the parable of the ten virgins who all went forth to meet the bridegroom, but of whom five fell away and were lost, the contemptuous rejoinder of Dr. Williams was, that any man who believed a doctrine of Scripture on account of what five women said, and five foolish women at that, deserved to go to perdition.

In the presentation of these five points

there were among the New England theologians noble rivalries and generous differences; there were, too, marked superiorities and inferiorities in acuteness and vigor, in force and felicity of exposition, in dialectical and apologetic skill; but with the single exception of Edwards, they rarely went outside the Calvinistic plan, and without exception that plan stood as the final thought upon man's origin, history, and destiny. Dr. Foster,[1] while sensitive to the personal force of Edwards, is strangely wanting, for a mind of his candor, in appreciation of Edwards's rational strength. In ranking the founder of the school below Taylor and Park, Dr. Foster cannot be said to appreciate the solitary distinction of Edwards. Taylor and Park are, after Edwards, the acutest thinkers in the school, but in compass, in depth, in fertility of rational device, and above all, in speculative genius, they are not to be mentioned by the side of

[1] *The Collapse of the New England Theology.*

Edwards. A full examination of the unpublished writings of Edwards would show a mind of singular openness and of unceasing movement. When a young man he wrote:

> I observe that old men seldom have any advantage of new discoveries, because these are beside a way of thinking they are used to. Resolved, if ever I live to years, that I will be impartial to hear the reasons of all pretended discoveries, and receive them, if rational, how long soever I have been used to another way of thinking.

It can be said that this resolve, made in his early manhood, exerted over Edwards a continuous influence, an influence more decided in his last years. In his published writings Edwards occasionally forgets the traditional system and goes forth in the great quest of truth. His essays on "The Will," "The Nature of Virtue," "The End for which God made the World," and "Religious Affections" are untrammeled discussions. They are related logically to what

in Edwards is deepest and most truly his own — his conception of the absolutely perfect God — and they succeed or fail according to their fidelity or infidelity to that conception. Edwards's size and passion win even for his errors a kind of consecration; while his occasional free movement in the pure vision of truth, out beyond the boundaries of tradition, marks him as unique in his school.

Still, we must return to the simple fact that Calvinism was from first to last the philosophy of man and man's world held and taught by these thinkers. Side issues there were many and important; large questions of theodicy were often in debate, especially in the case of Bellamy and Hopkins and Taylor; speculation concerning the moral government of God was rife; the consideration of human freedom called into existence, in addition to the great treatise of Edwards, a voluminous literature; the Divine life in man soared away into a wild

idealism as in the Hopkinsian conception of love; now and then these thinkers, and emphatically Edwards and Hopkins, struck notes more akin to the music of Spinoza than to that of John Calvin, and we hear in them answering strains to the lofty one-sidedness of the words, "He that truly loves God must not desire that God should love him in return"; yet, when this is freely admitted, it must be said that after these excursions these New England divines one and all returned to the main outline of the Calvinistic scheme, and settled in it as the final account of their religion.

II

THAT this system of opinion has lost control of the religious mind of the present generation will be universally admitted. There are many teachers of religion with no theology, many with a new, and still more with a crude theology, but nowhere do we find men of modern training and respectable intellect holding the New England theology. Our question then is, How came this system of belief, dominant in our churches for more than one hundred and fifty years, suddenly in the last quarter of the nineteenth century to lose its hold upon thinking minds? What causes brought about its sudden and final collapse?

In any fair account of this collapse, while the chief blame must lie with the system itself, some blame will be seen to attach to the state of the public mind. There has

arisen within the Christian Church considerable indifference to speculative thinking. Practical interests have been engrossing, as they should be, but the dependence of living, practical interests upon fundamental ideas, and upon clearness on fundamental subjects, has not been seen. The mill-round of the mind has been substituted for the sun-path. An indescribable pettiness, a mean kind of retail trade, has largely taken possession of the teachers of religion. The eternal spaces in which, like the planet, the world of practical interest lives and moves and has its being, have fallen from the public mind. Hence questions of the origin of sin and its permission in a universe over which God is sovereign, serious thinking upon moral government, the nature of virtue, the character of disinterested love, the decree of the Most High and the eternal economy of his being have not appealed to this generation. To the discredit of the generation be it said.

This age is characterized by a strong aversion to severe thinking. Immediacy has become a habit, perhaps a disease. Its motto is he that runs may read, and the reader who intends to run as he reads must not choose for his race-course the New England divinity. The New England writers are far from dull; they know how to express themselves with precision and vigor, but they are thinkers, men who deal with ideas, who set ideas in new lights, and support their views with definition and argument. They tax the intellect of the reader, and in return for his toil they make him aware of his intelligence, a thing that does not always happen at the present day with books on theological subjects. The discourses of Edwards and Bellamy and Hopkins and Emmons were spoken to New England farmers, their wives, and their sons and daughters; and when they were published they were read largely by the same class of persons. There was in those days eagerness to attack

and master a difficult subject; keen interest in matter that, in order to be understood, had to be read a score of times; enthusiasm for some attainment in rational strength and in argumentative skill. To-day whatever cannot be understood in the twinkling of an eye is generally regarded with aversion. The supreme heresy in thinking is the call to intellectual toil. The kindergarten, while it may be good for children, when it becomes a universal method, makes escape from intellectual childhood difficult. If severe thinking were as much admired in the New England of to-day as it was in the New England of fifty and one hundred years ago, more respect would be felt for the old divines, and their best works would be oftener read.

There is in the public mind the absence of a due sense of the difficulties that inhere in every possible view of the world. Criticism of the New England system has been current for so long that it has gained possession

of the thoughtful public. The criticism is largely well founded; but it is apt to lead to utter revolt from the works of these able and honest men. They are blamed for failing to do what no mortal man has yet succeeded in doing, presenting a philosophy of man's world true to all the known facts and giving complete satisfaction to the reason. In our new thinking we accept at our own hands a philosophy far enough from complete rationality, and we refuse to do the same by the men of the older thinking. It would do our philosophy of religion good to be considered and debated by the New England divines. We might find, perhaps, that all the difficulties and impossibilities are not with the ancient creed, that some serious mysteries need clearing up at our hands.

While fair-minded men will, I think, admit the truth of this indictment against the public mind of to-day, the charge must be renewed that the chief causes of collapse must be found in the character of the an-

cient creed. The New England theology had taken for granted that it was substantially the final theology. While resting in this easy assumption it was, to the amazement and incredulity of its latest masters, suddenly outgrown. It fell from power and passed away because it was outgrown by the religious consciousness whose interpreter and servant it professed to be. On this ground its discharge was inevitable. The full significance of this explanation will become apparent, I hope, through the following observations.

It must never be forgotten that the New England divinity was not in any profound sense an original movement of thought. It was a new version of the system of John Calvin, in whom again it must be observed the system was not original. As is well known, the New England theology, while derived from Calvin, dates from Augustine. Thoughts of infinite moment are found in rich profusion in the writings of Augustine,

and next to his ecclesiasticism, the outline of a theological system contained in his works is the least of his services to the Christian intellect and spirit. There are in the profound spiritual and speculative life of Augustine hints toward a philosophy of Christianity other and infinitely nobler than that which he outlined, an implicit philosophy which continues to invest his great spirit with enduring fascination.

Still, the outline of dogma made by Augustine has been the basis of the traditional scheme from that day to this. His idea of a race universally depraved, traced to the sin of Adam as its source, has been a ruling idea. His doctrine of salvation on the ground of Christ's atonement, by irresistible grace calling into existence saving faith and securing the perseverance of the believer, has been a ruling doctrine. His scheme of deliverance as originating in the decree of God, and as contemplating the redemption of only a part of the fallen and

miserable race of man, has been the dominating scheme. From Augustine's day to this the traditional theology has never held the idea of anything other or better than a salvation of the remnant. Therefore, notwithstanding the order and vigor imparted to this scheme by John Calvin, and the valid distinctions, fruitful modifications, and noble expansions introduced by Edwards and his successors down to Professor Park, in whom the line terminates, the philosophy of man's life in this world and in the next presented in the New England theology is essentially that of the great Bishop of Hippo.

The New England scheme is thus wanting in fundamental originality. It arises out of no face-to-face contact with the problem of man's existence; it never occurs to it to interrogate the vast and tragic reality at first hand. Man and man's world were not independent and absorbing objects of study to the New England divines; man and his

world did not possess their imagination; the knowledge of human beings already in existence did not in them raise the hope of richer knowledge; the scientific spirit, of which Bacon was the great modern prophet, the attitude toward their world of inquiry, concrete and severe methods of study and hope, did not control them; the human reality before them did not win them into an original relation to it, nor fascinate them onward to fresh discoveries, nor so engage them that they could not let it go till they had wrung from it by direct struggle its divine secret. These men were not seers; they beheld no new worlds of ideas rising up out of the mighty order of fact; they found no richer and deeper meanings in man's nature and history, such as would have inevitably suggested a new plan of salvation. They made little use, as will be seen later, of their Master in seeking a principle for the interpretation of the moral character of the universe; like thousands before them they

missed entirely the meaning of their Master's promise concerning the spirit of truth. They assumed that the religious vision of the world was complete as given in the New Testament; they did not grasp the fact that the words of Jesus are spirit and life, that they are an organism of spirit and life; they never dreamed that Christianity is on its intellectual side the soul of pure search after all truth, the soul of assimilation to its own growing organism of all the special truths in all the different departments of human inquiry and concern; the soul that seizes these threads of discovered being wherever found, and that weaves them into the ever-greatening structure of its own faith. Like their predecessors, for more than a thousand years, these New England divines were without original vision of the Divine universe; they were mainly thinkers within traditional lines, expounders, advocates, diffusers of beliefs that had been fixed by ecclesiastical author-

ity. All this is matter of fact. Whether they are to be praised or blamed for this attitude may indeed admit of difference of opinion; concerning the attitude itself, there is no room for difference. I repeat that there is no distinct original consciousness of man and man's world in the New England divines; nor is their vision, in the full meaning of the word, deep, comprehensive, free. They all read the tragic reality through the ancient categories. They recall the traditional scheme essentially unaltered, and they turn it into a philosophy of the Christian faith for themselves and their people. That such genius for theology as we find in Edwards, Hopkins, N. W. Taylor, and Edwards A. Park should have gone this dreary way is indeed deplorable. There are few greater warnings against the evil of self-commitment to tradition. The suppression of individuality, the settled disregard of inward misgiving and protest, the sacrifice of the ideal of reason and conscience in the service

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of faith, have seldom presented themselves in more conspicuous examples. Strong enough as these men were to overturn tradition and throw the contents of faith into new moulds, fitted as they were for original vision and interpretation of human existence, they one and all adopted, adapted, and tinkered the ancient scheme while God's great growing world was speeding forward heedless of their poor categories. That a new version of an ancient and incompetent system, however impressed with the vitality of powerful minds, and however the bewildered masses allowed themselves to be driven to rest in it, could not last in a free world of which it is no true account should seem to reasonable men only natural, and indeed inevitable. Originality in theological theory, fundamental constructive originality, there has been none from the age of Augustine to the present generation. Under such circumstances, in a growing world, there is no need of a ghost to tell us

that there is something rotten in our theological Denmark.

It may be contended that there is one fairly original element in New England theology, its theodicy. Several of the greater masters of the school were deeply concerned with the fact of moral evil and its existence, in a world over which the righteous God is sovereign. Here the discussion turned upon two subjects, one the Divine perfections, the other the freedom of man. Dr. Foster says, "New England theology to the end sacrificed the doctrine of freedom to that of the Divine perfections."[1] This is true, but it is not the whole truth. The New England theologians failed both in their conception of the Divine perfection and in their idea of human freedom. Here, for example, is one of the multitude of utterances in Edwards concerning God. He had been speaking with his father about his religious experiences:

> And when the discourse ended I walked

[1] *The Collapse of the New England Theology.*

abroad alone, in a solitary place in my father's pasture, for contemplation. And as I was walking there, and looking up on the sky and clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God that I know not how to express. After this . . the appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of Divine glory in almost everything. God's excellency, his wisdom, his purity and love, seemed to appear in everything; in the sun and moon and stars; in the clouds and the blue sky; in the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature. I often used to sit and view the moon for continuance; and in the day spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky to behold the sweet glory of God in these things; in the meantime, singing forth with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer.

In this poetic way Edwards sets forth in his early manhood his conception of God, a conception that grew upon him to the end, and that drew into itself his whole being and all its interests. Here is the point at which the modern mind arraigns Edwards.

His vision is of a God absolute in love, and yet that vision in no fundamental sense rules the evolution of his thought. The conclusion to which Edwards comes concerning man's world is an appalling contradiction of the original vision and premise. This contradiction would not have been possible if Edwards had conceived the divine perfection in the spirit of his Master Christ. In Edwards's idea of perfection, and in that of his successors, there inheres a fatal defect. This idea of perfection is not what we mean when we apply it to the best of men and then add thereto infinity. In the bulk to which the idea is raised an immense subtle evil has crept in. Something may be good in him that evil is in me; this is the hidden germ of unhallowed issue in the vast and imposing conception. So much for the New England theology and the Divine perfections.

The idea of human freedom entertained by the masters of this school is formal and

even superficial. Had they taken Augustine's position here, and held with him that the good will is alone free; had they seen that it is the inevitable tendency of the Divine perfection and every other form of moral power to lead the will from bondage to freedom, they might have done permanent service to theology by their theodicy. As it stands, their discussion, both of the Divine perfection and of human freedom, is without substantial originality.

Edwards did not care primarily for the freedom of man; he cared for it because of its relation to the sovereignty of God. Only such freedom could he see as would not conflict with the Divine sovereignty. His idea of freedom is simply the unhindered expression of fixed habit either good or bad. There is surely little originality here. Deeper than the power of habit he did not go, nor did he at any time divine the existence in man of a rational order that might overturn worlds of evil habit. Plato had

taught that right education consists in taking pleasure, under the rule of fixed habit, in the proper objects of pleasure. Deeper than this Edwards does not go; his discussion does not go behind the pleasures, good or bad, in which men take a habitual interest.

Nathaniel W. Taylor fixed attention upon the power to the contrary in the will. So far so good; such power is doubtless there; but Taylor has done nothing to make it evident, nothing to show its worth, supposing it to exist. Taylor cares no more for human freedom than does Edwards. He argues in favor of freedom that he may save man's responsibility, and thus clear God of accountability for the introduction and continuance of sin in the world. Taylor's freedom is formal, and exists mainly for apologetic purposes. Into the real freedom of man, or the point of contact between man's capacity for real freedom and the Divine perfection that works for man's freedom, Taylor had

little insight. He was an able and an honest man; at the same time he was under the spell of abstractions. A power to the contrary which in the entire history of man has never been exercised is something to which only the consciousness of an apologist can bear witness. It is no true account of man's spirit; it is an abstraction, a dream. The freedom of man is no such miserable abstraction and dialectical device; it is life concurrent with the truth of things, and the relation of the spirit of truth to a will in error is in such a display of the persuasions of truth that the reasonable soul shall be eventually won by them from bondage to the liberty of the sons of God. Freedom is not the mere possibility to go either of two ways at the fork of which a man may stand. Such an idea of freedom is trivial. Freedom is insight into the true order of existence, susceptibility to that insight, obedience to it and harmonious existence under it. If one is without that insight, one has capacity for

it, and the Divine perfection is the assurance that it will be ultimately won.

The relation of Professor Park, one of the acutest masters of the school, to the question of freedom is interesting. Park maintains that the will always is as the greatest apparent good. If this is the case, either of two conclusions follows. If this apparent good is unreal, God is alone responsible for this condition of the individual will. If the apparent good is real good, the individual will is good, and again God is the efficient cause. But how are we to make the transfer from apparent good to essential good? Obviously there is but one answer; it all depends upon the behavior of the Most High. That a mind as alert and acute as that of Park should have been brought to such a pass is indeed strange. It could not have happened if the thinker in question had been profoundly concerned with the free life of man. In that case no one would have been keener in the observation that man's rational na-

ture contains the provision, under the illumination of experience, of escape from the field of illusion into the world of true eternal good. This rational nature, under the illumination of experience, finds no adequate recognition in the thought of the New England divines, and therefore, here in the sphere of their special activity, no less than in their general scheme, their work has passed from power because it was wanting both in originality and in depth.

This ancient theology had in it from the first, and preserved untouched to the end, a fatal contradiction. According to this scheme the world was made by God, and yet the world in its misfortune and misery was condemned by God as if it had made itself. When any good was found in the world, it was at once argued that it was due to God and his sovereign decree; when moral evil and misery and death were discovered in the world, it was argued that

they were due to man and his abuse of his freedom. If the Divine decree did not include the fall of man, then the world broke from the Divine control and remained mainly triumphant against God; if the Divine decree did include the fall and all the events in human history, then men were obliged to read the character of God from that history. Universal predestination and partial redemption either eventually wreck the scheme in which they meet or they work a woe infinitely deeper; they wreck confidence in the moral character of God. Nothing in the high and serious thinking of men is more melancholy than the perpetual see-saw between the universal decree of God and the universal depravity of man for which the human will is held accountable; between the racial need of redemption and the partial response of God in the gift of grace; between this partial bestowment of the Holy Spirit and the universality of the atonement as held by the New England di-

vines; between the sovereignty of the God of love and the eternal damnation of a vast portion of mankind. In view of this interior inconsistency, both intellectual and moral, the wonder is not that the scheme eventually collapsed, but that it endured so long. In a fair field and no favor, in open and free discussion, it would have gone to the wall centuries ago. Authority, sentiment, despair, in the presence of the task of finding a better philosophy, fear lest precious things should be exposed to peril if reason took a bolder range, and the conservative instinct in man doubtless combined to protect and perpetuate this crude scheme; still, to authority, to the absence of full freedom in the Christian Church, this creed is chiefly indebted for its thousand years of gloom.

It must be said that in much of its thinking the New England theology was artificial. By this I do not mean that it so appeared to these thinkers, but simply that

their method led them away from human life. Few things are more dreary than the New England discussions on the atonement. Till Bushnell arrives upon the scene — and he is not in the New England circle, he is the prophet of another order of ideas — the atonement in all the phases of its presentation was as nearly destitute of ethical value as anything could well be. The moral Governor of the world, under whose government sin came into the world, could not forgive it until a life of infinite worth had been offered as a satisfaction to the majesty of violated law. This was the central proposition round which the dreary and dead debate proceeded. A moral God played only a nominal part in the scheme, a Father in heaven had no part in it, the spiritual nature of the soul was ignored by it, and it never even got a glimpse into the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Of no other section of New England divinity can one say without some qualification that it

is a simple rubbish-heap of dead opinions. Anything can be taught in a divinity school by heroic scholars, and anything can be studied and understood, in part, by persistent students; but ideas there are that cannot be preached with any degree of interest where men are ethically sound and mentally sane. The record of the ways and means, whereby able and good but misguided men tried to force successive generations of believers into emotional states answering to the requirements of the governmental theory of the atonement, is a record of the rankest kind of unreality. It is not to the point to say, what indeed is true, that there are worse forms of the doctrine of the atonement than the governmental. The contention is that here is one reason for the passing of the system from living interest. At a point of infinite depth, the relation of the human soul in sin to the Eternal goodness, it had thoughts only legal, forensic, mechanical.

Indeed, it may be said that every historic phase of the atonement, except the moral phase, reveals uncured the malady of the human mind to which Jesus spoke his healing gospel. That malady is the issue of a false conception of the character of God. The sacrificial systems of the world were built upon the idea that the Divine power must be placated if sinful man would be forgiven. Propitiation is at the heart of them all; and so deep into the mind of the most enlightened races has this hideous distortion of the character of the Eternal Father gone that the gospel of Christ, perfected in his death as the servant of truth and love and attested thereby, would probably have failed of gaining a governing influence over those to whom it was addressed had it not been translated by the apostles into the sacrificial language of the people of Israel. The soundness of this remark is confirmed by the purpose and method of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. That great

writer discovers the pure spirituality of the gospel of Christ, its transcendence of the old sacrificial system of Israel; and yet, in order to be understood in this endeavor, he is compelled to translate this transcendent and spiritual faith into the language of priest, altar, and sacrifice. Thus deep was the mental malady in the apostolic age. And here we see clearly how that which is central and most precious in the gospel of Jesus, his idea of the eternal, fatherly love of God, was endangered by this translation into the unclean idiom of the world. For the historic forms of the atonement are a chapter in religious pathology; they have a great and a pathetic human interest. They discover abysmal depths in man; they disclose the vastness and wildness of man's world. At the same time they contribute nothing toward the positive showing of the way in which the soul escapes from its sin. They build upon the old notion which Jesus came to displace. In their successive forms they

perpetuate the idea that God is essentially unfriendly to poor, erring mortals; that He requires to be appeased by some offering, propitiated by some costly sacrifice or satisfied in some public relation of his character, before He can lift into hope a penitent child. From the point of view of the conception of God as Father, the group of ideas perpetuated in all phases of the atonement, except the moral phase, are the worst blasphemy ever offered to the Most High. They come from religion as conceived and operated by the priesthood of the world; they are contradicted and set at naught by religion as conceived and presented by the greater prophets of the race, and supremely by the supreme prophet, Jesus of Nazareth. His parable of the Lost Son is his version of his own heart, his version, too, of the heart of God. The idea that heals the malady of the human mind is the idea of God in the teaching and life and death of Jesus. In this recurrence upon the supreme idea of Chris-

tian faith the New England divines do not count. They did nothing, at this momentous point, to deliver man from his blasphemy against God; unwittingly they did much to confirm him in unworthy thoughts of the Eternal lover of men. The free world of to-day has no thanks for them here; in strict truth they deserve none.

One of the ablest treatises in the New England divinity is Dr. N. W. Taylor's book, "The Moral Government of God." President Porter informs us that "'The Moral Government of God' was the great thought of Dr. Taylor's intellect." "It occupied his mind more than any and every other subject." I read this treatise while a student in the seminary more than forty years ago, and I was then greatly impressed with its power. I have been reading it again, and I still recognize the ability shown in it. The plan of the work is large, the discussion is thorough and coherent, the order reminds one of the successive deductions in the

ethics of Spinoza, the clearness, energy, and precision of statement are beyond question. But when all this has been said, it must be added that the work is essentially artificial. It is a discussion largely in the air, away from the great realities and forces of human life; it is abstract, dialectical, going mainly in the strength of presuppositions, wanting in concreteness, wholly wanting in the scientific spirit. It is divided into three sections. First, the "Moral Government of God in the Abstract"; second, the "Moral Government of God in Nature"; third, the "Moral Government of God in the Scriptures." The analogy upon which the work is constructed is civil government. For Dr. Taylor God was a sovereign ruler after the pattern of civil rulers upon earth. This was the thought that chiefly occupied his intellect, and the idea which is basal in Christianity and the heart and soul of its message, the idea of the Eternal Father, had no perceptible influence upon this thinker in his chief

contribution to the theological thought of his time. If New England divinity, in the hands of one of its greatest representatives, could be so much in the air, so far away from man's moral world, so unaware of the supreme conception of the gospel of Jesus Christ, it should not seem strange that among weaker men it became still more unreal.

One of the great merits claimed for the New England divinity was its distinction between natural and moral ability. All men had the natural ability to repent of their sins and perfectly to keep the law of God; all men were without the moral ability, that is, the willingness to repent of their sins and to meet their perfect obligation to the law of God. There is perhaps some merit in the distinction. There is an impulse, often enough unliberated, in the rational nature of the soul, a reserve of energy in the form of capacity below the structure of evil habit, to which the Christian appeal may

sink. If looked at in this way, the distinction may be considered valid. The whole capacity of the soul is not expressed in the current bad character. There is a capacity below the actual evil character to which the sovereign moral appeal may come, a capacity which when spoken to with might may become a blazing power in which the evil character is consumed. But this was not the way in which the New England divines were in the habit of regarding the distinction. It was mainly an apologetic device, in aid of the theologian when he was hard pressed in other parts of his system. Why should God involve the whole race with Adam and thus necessitate a first choice that was evil and an endless succession of choices all bad? The reply was, there was no necessity in the case. Man had the natural power not to sin, the natural ability perfectly to meet the demands of moral law. Why should God elect only a portion of this fallen race to salvation and thus exclude the rest? The reply

was, that God does not exclude the rest; they have the power to repent of their sins, to believe on Jesus Christ, to cast themselves upon God for salvation and be saved. But no man comes to God unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and why should the non-elect be left beyond the pale of the Spirit's influence? The reply is, that they are without excuse in not coming to God without the special aid of the Spirit seeing they have the full natural ability to come. Thus ran the wretched riot of dialectical unreality. Professor Park, when he came, in the course of his famous lectures, to the discussion of natural ability and moral inability, was in the habit of remarking to his class with grim humor,

> "Ye who have tears to shed,
> Prepare to shed them now."

The memory of that wild wilderness in which was no living thing, not even scorpions or flying plagues, a wilderness predestined never to rejoice or blossom as the

rose, is indeed a memory of the dire distress of the Christian Church in New England.

Another conspicuous defect of the New England divinity was its restricted use of human reason. With all its confidence in reason and its bold rationalism in certain fields of inquiry, it set fixed bounds to the operation of free thought, saying here shall thy proud waves be stayed. It inherited the unholy distinction between natural and revealed religion; it gave free scope to the human mind only in the sphere of natural religion. The Bible, as the record of revealed religion, was indeed the subject of scholarship, historical, textual, interpretative; but when the history was clear, the text settled, and the interpretation fixed, the function of reason was at an end. The result must be accepted, whether it was the story in the Book of Exodus about God hardening Pharaoh's heart that he might destroy him, or the account in the Gospels of Christ's surrender of his life for the good of the world.

Theology became a construction of texts from all parts of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. The leading doctrines — predestination, election, depravity, propitiation, forensic justification, the limitation of moral opportunity to this life, everlasting punishment of the wicked and the heavenly life of believers — were found in texts in all the Books of the Bible, and were accorded equal value wherever found. If the moral sense revolted at the result, as in Emmons's sermon on "Reprobation," or the doctrine of election advocated as baldly by N. W. Taylor as by any of the school, so much the worse for the moral sense. Here is Scripture properly interpreted and here is the result; accept or reject it; there it stands, and from its finality there is no appeal. A theology constructed in this way built into itself the soul of revolt, the sure prophecy of its own ultimate destruction. There can be no forced results of an abiding character in the sphere of thought. Coercion is something

to which the human intellect cannot permanently surrender. Authority itself is bound to become the subject of arrest, trial, and judgment. While that day is deferred the Bible stands outside the process of the critical intellect; and from its vast compass the system of traditional dogma may be established. But the thing established on authority can last only while the authority lasts; when the authority decays, the superstructure of dogma falls to the ground.

As we look back from our own free world, this restriction of reason to a particular field, this exclusion of it from the field of profoundest moment, seems very strange. Why did these men fail to learn from the process of the Holy Spirit in their own souls? Why did they not see that life is the parent of literature; that wherever God is in the life of men, in their thoughts, feelings, purposes, and achievements, He will necessarily be in their words? In what way did it escape them that man is most of an agent,

most of a creative power, when most under the influence of the Spirit of God, and that wherever words carry the burden of the Lord they carry that burden on the active humanity of men? How came it to pass that these acute thinkers did not discern the origin of the monumental parts of the Bible in the human life that God had filled with his Eternal presence? Had they faced such questions the Bible would have opened to them a new and a momentous expanse of human experience, the supreme opportunity for the achieving reason of man.

There is only one answer to these questions. These men conceived of the Bible as chiefly a book of mysteries; the doctrines of revealed religion were at heart mysteries, and the best work of the human intellect was done when the super-intelligible character of the doctrine was exhibited. These doctrines were for faith and not for reason; they were for faith, not as all unverified ideas are for faith, but for faith as passing

all understanding. The New England divinity was, therefore, in no adequate sense an expression of the free mind; it was not the result of the unrestricted use of reason. It was a compound of reason and tradition, the mixed issue of freedom and authority. It is not edifying to see Edwards, in the full movement of speculation, suddenly pause, begin a new section of his essay, and lug into his argument proof-texts from every corner of the Bible to cover the incompleteness of his rational procedure. He who had such high confidence in reason, so wide a vision of its field, and who exercised his own great gift of insight and argument with such fearless vigor, yet never dreamed that the Bible itself is the supreme product of human reason and the supreme field for the exercise of the reason in the service of the Spirit. The isolation of the human from the Divine by all these thinkers, except Emmons, was perhaps the source of this limitation, the putting asunder of what God has forever

joined. Whatever the cause may have been, the view that finds in the Bible the sovereign expression of reason and the field for the exercise of reason of highest moment, was hidden from Edwards and all his successors; they never gained the least insight into the nature of the revelation recorded in the Bible. That revelation was to them a process singular, unique, different, not only in degree, but in kind, from the life of holy souls among other nations and among themselves, isolated, super-intelligible, an oracle whose message must be accepted even against the protest of the reason and the conscience.

These criticisms apply equally, it need hardly be said, to traditional theology in its entire course. The attitude of indiscriminating reverence toward the Bible was, on the part of the New England divines, the inheritance of faith. They were in bondage to a book, and while it is the supreme Book to which they were in bondage, the fact that

here, in this greatest sphere of the free intellect, they had no dream of the function of the intellect, is another reason why their dominion has passed away. In ideal, in method, and in result they are superseded. Their ideal of the sphere of reason was a meager and restricted ideal; their method was without scientific temper and sureness; their results were the uncritical compound of error and truth, of essential and valueless, that one might expect. And if these words seem severe, let it be remembered that the holy cause of sound thinking in the interest of religion, especially in the interest of the Christian religion, has suffered too long from timidity in the presence of great names.

It must be still further observed that except in a single direction the New England divinity refused to learn from its adversaries. It did indeed put itself in battle array. It became keenly alert to strategic positions both for offense and defense. Under attack

it assumed a more compact and formidable dialectical shape. Comparison between the form which the New England divinity assumed in the hands of Edwards and his immediate successors, and that in which it was presented by N. W. Taylor and Edwards A. Park, shows that the system in the hands of these later masters gained greatly in dialectical strength. Indeed, Park spent too much of his force here. He had the gift of the dialectician in unsurpassed power. No man in our American world now living will bear comparison with him here. He developed the logical function to the highest point of efficiency, and till they sat under the teaching of Park, students did not know how fascinating the logician could be. Dr. Foster is undoubtedly right in saying that this thinker did the best that could be done with the materials given him.

But if strong opponents thus pressed the New England divinity into better dialectical form in the hands of its later masters,

these masters refused to learn materially from their adversaries. Arminianism was deeply concerned with the freedom of the will, and with the reality of man's responsibility for his deeds. New England Calvinism met this deep moral concern with ill-concealed logical contempt, with the ghostly distinction between natural ability and moral ability, and with the poor verbalism of the power of choice to the contrary which, apart from electing grace, in the entire history of mankind had never once been exercised. New England Calvinism, under pressure of the moral soundness and passion of Arminianism, never once faced, in scientific temper, the question of human freedom; it continued to treat this burning issue dialectically; it therefore refused to learn from an adversary less powerful than itself in intellect, but upon the question in debate morally deeper and truer far to the consciousness of normal men.

Equally persistent was the refusal to

learn from Unitarianism. From the first Unitarianism was regarded with dread as the supreme form of heresy. Unitarianism so wounded devout feeling for Jesus Christ, so struck at what it regarded here as superstition, appeared so indifferent to that which the New England divines conceived to be the essence of the Christian faith, that they are not without excuse in their attitude of exclusion. But while they are not without excuse, they are without justification. They failed in the presence of an immense opportunity. For it has become obvious to competent judges in all denominations that Unitarianism, in the hands of Channing and his successors, rediscovered the Christian doctrine of man. This is a service for which immortal thanks are due; and as is generally the way in cases of this kind, the thanks are expressed by silent appropriation on the part of all enlightened religious bodies of the idea thus rediscovered, and with no recognition, but with even aversion

for the rediscoverers. To be sure, the Unitarians were quick to follow with a similar device. They took over into their body of thought, without acknowledgment and without reasoned insight, the heart of Trinitarianism theology; they put into God the Father the content of character and pity found in the second person of the Trinitarian faith; they gave what they had taken a new name and nothing more. Our business here, however, is not with the weakness but with the strength of Unitarianism in relation to the exclusiveness of the New England divinity. In the face of the self-evident and glorious humanism of Jesus revived by the Unitarian movement, the masters of the traditional divinity presented on the whole a closed mind. In no perceptible degree did it influence their doctrine of man. He still continued, from birth to conversion and adoption, a lost soul and no child of God.

Here the failure of the New England di-

vines meant disaster to their cause. They lost the chance to appropriate the Christian doctrine of man, to affirm two incarnations; one in all men because they are children of God; the other in Jesus Christ as the supreme Son of God; one universal and the other ideal, in the light of which the universal is to be understood. They lost the chance to renew in a deeper and surer way their doctrine of Christ and their doctrine of God through the new doctrine of man. This, I take it, is one of the greater mistakes of the traditional divinity. It never did see the value of man; it could not take in that value when brought to its attention by its Unitarian adversaries; it did not dream of the fruitfulness for Christology and theology of a new consciousness of the worth of man. It was essentially, if the paradox may be pardoned, an inhuman humanism; it went to the wall finally because untrue to the teaching of Jesus concerning man and God. Properly understood, Unitarianism is the

complement of Trinitarianism no less than its rival; that is, if the Trinitarian belief in a social God is to live, it must be matched with the Unitarian faith in a social humanity. Further, there must be between the two sets of beliefs action and reaction, if they are to come to their full development. If with the Trinitarian we say God is Father, with the Unitarian we must say man is the inalienable child of God; if with the Trinitarian we claim that there is a special, ideal incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, answering to his vocation in the history of religion in the earth, we must contend with the Unitarian that there is a universal incarnation in mankind in virtue of which man is man with the impulse of the Eternal in his heart. In failing to see in the positive message of Unitarianism the complement to what was highest in their own faith, and the correction of its malady of errors about man, the masters of the New England theology made a supreme mistake.

Universalism was the third stout antagonist of the New England divinity. It met with the exclusiveness which had been meted out to Unitarianism. Besides, a special scorn fell upon it because of its deficiency in scholarship and in intellectual power. There was, it must be admitted, some excuse for this attitude toward the new doctrine. In its early and popular forms Universalism was more concerned in getting all men to heaven than in getting them into a fit condition to enjoy heaven when they arrived there. Nothing could be more shocking to the majestic moral sense of the Puritan than popular Universalism's easy ideas about sin, its shallowness upon every question of conscience, its conversion of the most worthy Judge Eternal into an infinite, indiscriminating sentimentalist. From the first, Universalism was a great interest, but for many years it was an interest poorly served. It came as a protest against an inhuman view of God; it was not

accompanied by a deep concern about personal righteousness. It spent too much of its force in denunciation of the orthodox God and not enough upon the character of the universalist man. It did not go deep enough to see that man has but one interest, and that is righteousness. If it had seen this and seen it whole, it could have repeated with tremendous power the words of Socrates: "There is no evil that can happen to a good man, whether he be alive or dead"; and the kindred words of Paul, "All things work together for good to them that love God." If Universalism's doctrine of the future had risen up out of the heart of its passion to make man righteous, its power would have been greater far. As it stood it did not call for strenuous moral manhood.

This was an unutterable offense to the masters of the New England theology. This unfortunate circumstance concealed from them the real question raised by Universal-

ism — the moral character of God. If they had been wise, they would have taken Whittier's "Eternal Goodness" as the form of the doctrine profitable for study; if they had been prophetic, they would have seen how the admission into their theodicy of the main contention of Universalism — the love of God for every soul that he has made and his everlasting purpose to pursue with his redeeming grace all souls in all worlds — would have given it new range, reality, life, and worth. For here again the heresy was the complement of the orthodoxy. The only original element in the New England divinity was its theodicy; that theodicy with the insight of Universalism left out was meager and hopeless; with this insight included as a principle of revision and extension the theodicy would have been living and potent to-day. For Universalism has brought forward the larger view; and the larger view has proved to be the worthier view. No interest of morality is endangered by the faith

that the Infinite works and works eternally for the perfect righteousness of every human soul. It will be seen, I think, that the moral hope of the race is grounded upon this faith.

This inhospitality of the New England divinity toward new and reconstructive ideas, together with the other defects noted — its traditionalism, its inclusion of fatal contradiction in its own heart, its artificial mode of thought, and its restricted use of reason — kept the system stationary in a swiftly growing world. It fell from power because it was found beneath the best religious consciousness of the time. It was found to be outgrown in two fundamental ways; it was outgrown in knowledge and in ethical conceptions. A brief statement of fact is sufficient to show that it was outgrown in knowledge. It knew nothing of the application of the methods of free historical inquiry to the Bible. It never took the position of the scientific historian, regarding the

rise and character of Biblical ideas. Of the Bible as it emerges from the study of the just and devout scientific scholar the New England divinity was simply ignorant. Its view of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures was outgrown. In regard to the natural history of man it was overtaken by the same fate. The theory that runs the many different forms of existence in the world to-day back to a common primitive vitality, that traces the wide-branching tree of life downward to one original root, they refused seriously to entertain. Adam was for them the head of the race behind which they did not care to go. To the last, in spite of the new vista introduced by evolution, the New England divines continued to build their doctrine of man upon a Hebrew myth. These men, with all their acuteness and power, were essentially provincial in their outlook upon the world. In general they knew next to nothing of the world of fruitful ideas in the philosophy of the Greeks and

Germans; nor did they know deeply the best things in French and English philosophy. When compared with the greater systems of thought their system was a poor and meager formalism. The riches of the intellectual life of the world lay largely outside their scheme. In general, of this world of wealth these men were unaware. In the few instances, like that of Henry B. Smith, where knowledge was ample, it meant nothing for the system of theology. Nor was there anywhere large knowledge of the great religions of the race outside of Christianity, nor the least sign of a scientific temper toward them. Among the New England divines there is no such book as that of Maurice on "The Religions of the World." In consequence of this limitation of outlook to their own religion, they were unable to disengage in it the eternal from the temporal. They were almost as much concerned about miracles as they were about the life of God in the Christian soul. They never

rose to the position from which the scholar sees that while miracles are the concomitants of all the religions, they are essential to none; that religion is essentially the life of God in man; and where God's life, as Infinite love, is purest and richest, as in Jesus Christ, there religion exists in its supreme form and power.

That the later New England divines should have allowed themselves to be outgrown in knowledge is a surprise; that they should have allowed themselves to be outgrown in ethical ideas is something of a reproach. Such is the fact. Edwards's vision of God, that upon which his rapt soul fed, that in whose strength he lived his great life, is destitute of reconstructive influence upon the Calvinism which he adopts and defends. The system of Edwards as a philosophy of man's world, upon the assumption that God exists and that He is absolutely good, is morally incredible. It is beneath the moral consciousness of the average respec-

table person in any civilized community. Hopkins's ideal of a disinterested soul is great and of enduring and pathetic value, yet it in no way enabled him to read the character of the Eternal in terms consonant with an enlightened conscience. The doctrines of the fall, ensuing universal depravity, and obligation to obedience where only the ghost of power was conceded to exist in natural ability, limited election, limited bestowment of saving grace, and eternal punishment for all who were found impenitent at death, are as a whole a body of teaching entirely outgrown by enlightened men. It would, indeed, be the supreme miracle, the contradiction of the solemn order and best hope of mankind, if a system, thus found to lie far below the moral consciousness of enlightened persons, should still maintain its ascendancy over them. The New England divinity fell from its ancient throne because it was found inadequate in knowledge and inferior in moral ideas. Its greatest over-

sight I reserve for remark later, its failure to read the character of the universe by the sovereign fact in its faith, the character of Jesus Christ.

III

IT is high time to change the tenor of remark, since this discussion is not wholly a diagnosis of the causes of death, nor altogether an obituary of the New England theology. It is high time to call attention to the surviving worth in it, to the eternal soul that we recognize all the more clearly that the old formalism in which it lived has passed away. This precious survival is both subjective and objective, a tradition of great men devoted to the highest human interest and a cluster of shining and imperishable ideas.

When the general growth of the community in knowledge has rendered obsolete a previous system of thought, it is the easiest thing in the world, and one of the cheapest, to underestimate the intellectual power of the masters of that system. From this sort of ruthless inhumanity fair-minded men

recoil. Progress calls for the conservation of every kind of noble power, and among the noblest kinds of power is the authentic tradition of great minds, enthusiastically devoted to the discovery and the defense of the ultimate meaning of man's world. The person who can read the greater treatises of Edwards without perceiving that he is in contact with an extraordinary intellect is not to be envied. Edwards impresses the honest and competent student as a mind of uncommon acuteness, massiveness, and depth. He is amazing in the fertility and force of his argumentative power. He approaches the character of the Platonic philosopher as a "spectator of all time and all existence." Under idioms of belief and speech that are outgrown, it is easy to recognize speculative genius of a high order, and pervading the speculation the passion of a great religious genius. The image of this great thinker on the banks of the Connecticut or among the Berkshire Hills is an abid-

ing consolation to all serious students of man's great and tragic world. And the higher the student rises in intellectual power and in moral passion, the more massive and beautiful in his imagination will the great figure of Edwards loom.

Few preachers are so highly trained as to be incapable of learning anything concerning the prophetic function from the works of Joseph Bellamy. He was a Connecticut pastor, in many ways isolated from the great world of learning; yet in his isolation he annexed the fortunes of the race to his parish and fixed in it a large vision of the universe. This man's ministry was not concerned with the organization of clubs, nor with serving tables. It was free from the pettiness that is the curse of the ministry in our time. It was occupied with the dispensation of the Eternal, and made its power felt in every parish and in every academic center in New England. It knew, too, the art of sound reasoning and clear, effective speech.

It remains a tradition of intellectual and moral power fitted to aid materially to-day in recalling preachers to the exalted possibilities of their vocation.

Of Samuel Hopkins, Dr. Channing writes:

> He was an illustration of the power of our spiritual nature. In narrow circumstances, with few outward indulgences, in great seclusion, he yet found much to enjoy. He lived in a world of thought, above all earthly passions.

It is not strange that out of such a soul should have come the loftiest piece of moral idealism in the literature of our country. His essay on the "Nature of True Holiness" is indeed a kind of classic upon the life of the spirit and the heights to which a great soul may soar. Here was a mind that had found the supreme secret of existence; that had found it in the world of love and service girt about with privation of every kind, and pitiless misunderstandings. Channing further relates of this master:

I preached for him once, and after the service in the pulpit he smiled on me, and said, "*The hat is not made yet.*" On my asking an explanation, he told me that Dr. Bellamy used to speak of theology as a progressive science, and compared the different stages of it to the successive processes of making a hat. The beaver was to be born, then to be killed, and then the felt to be made, etc. Having thus explained the similitude, he added, "The hat is not made, and I hope you will help to finish it."

The devout wish was fulfilled in Channing, and still it is true that "the hat is not made." This sense of the incompleteness of the work of his hands, of the work of his generation, is indispensable to the thinker in every science; it is indispensable to the thinker in the science of theology; and it is the precious inheritance from the New England divines.

Nathanael Emmons is a unique figure in the history of the New England divinity. He was a master in the construction of great sermons, many volumes of which were published, and which for two generations had

an extensive circulation. He was a thinker, acute, fearless, formidable; a teacher of theology who trained and sent into the ministry more than one hundred preachers; a theist whose vision of God carried him at times into pure pantheism; a splendid patriot and a great man whose more than ninety-five years of existence in this world is a tradition of many-sided power, of power, too, in a country minister, difficult to match, and still more difficult to surpass, in the history of any community. For the daring mind of to-day Emmons has a peculiar fascination. His sermons on "Divine and Human Agency" recall Spinoza. His terrible sermon on "Reprobation" discovers the impossible side of every system of pantheism. In this and in other sermons of a like nature Emmons will tolerate no disguises. He is absolutely frank and fearless. It was, indeed, a great community that could accord complete freedom to the man who thus turned New England Calvinism

into pantheism. Here is an example of Emmons's manner:

> Since the Scriptures ascribe all the actions of men to God as well as to themselves, we may justly conclude that the Divine agency is as much concerned in their bad as in their good actions. Men are no more capable of acting independently in the one instance than the other. It is God who worketh in men, both to will and to do in all cases without exception. He wrought equally in the minds of those who sold and in the minds of those who bought Joseph. He wrought as effectually in the minds of Joseph's brethren, when they sold him, as when they repented and besought his mercy. He not only prepared these persons to act, but made them act.

This man had the courage of his convictions, and from him we learn that freedom in New England Congregationalism did not begin yesterday.

Nathaniel W. Taylor has come in for his full share of criticism in this discussion, nor am I able to agree with Dr. Foster in his estimate of the importance of this thinker.

It would, however, be a manifest injustice to refuse to recognize his eminence. It is hardly possible to read his work on "The Moral Government of God" without admiration for his penetration, his method of exposition, his logical alertness and skill. Once more we have in Taylor the example of an eminent mind lifted into great efficiency through severe and continued discipline. Such intellects shed upon ordinary minds something of their own grandeur; and their steadfast diligence, their unslackening and arduous toil in the service of their cause, is a tradition that wise men will not willingly let die.

In Edwards A. Park, whom the writer knew, the most striking characteristic was the native force of his intellect and the degree of brilliant efficiency to which it had been raised by prolonged and consummate discipline. For skill and power in deductive argument Professor Park has never been surpassed by any thinker in our history. If

the stuff in which he dealt had been as good as the manner in which he handled it, Park would have been irresistible. His weakness was that of his school, material weakness; in formal skill, finish, and power he stood at the head of his school. It is, indeed, to be regretted that the memory of such gifts for logical discussion as those possessed by Professor Park, gifts that resembled immense logical instincts raised by long and energetic practice into marvelous efficiency, should become dim. Park's excellence here was a kind of object lesson in the intellectual world. Through this excellence he became the greatest teacher upon serious subjects that the country has ever known, and the tradition of this keen, accomplished, and powerful mind is too valuable to be permitted without protest to pass into oblivion. In the dauntless intellectual bearing and militant power of the entire New England school there is much to interest and instruct the teacher and preacher of Christianity

to-day. In respect of intellectual magnitude and discipline, we may well say,

"We are scarce our father's shadows cast at noon."

There is an objective survival in the New England system that as a system has perished. Certain abiding principles are concealed in the passing forms like wheat in the chaff. Criticism here is a process, not of extinction, but of winnowing. This process leads to a clearer possession of the substance of faith that has been in the Christian Church from early days, and that will remain in it so long as it shall have a gospel to offer to mankind. Sovereignty, sin, judgment, redemption, and the everlasting worth of the human soul, under fresh interpretation, and with richer content, are to emerge from the critical process as the new five points of faith. While men believe in the Infinite mind, while they believe that the Infinite mind is Almighty love, they must continue to believe in the sovereignty of

God. Something must be sovereign in this universe. Is it blind fate or intelligence, brute power, aimless, unconscious, or spirit? These are the alternatives, and while Faith is sane, she cannot hesitate in the choice of her ultimate principle. To be assured that the final sovereignty in this universe is the sovereignty of character, righteous and competent, would be the infinite consolation; to be able to believe in this sovereignty must continue to be the supreme privilege of Christian faith.

Against the moral idealism of the world there stands forth the tremendous fact of sin. Whether traced to Adam or to a prehuman ancestor in no way alters the fact. The ape of evolution brings into human history the same problem brought by the Adam of the traditional theology. The cry of man in his moral pain is still, Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The intellect in the service of the conscience still presents its vision of the good; the intellect

in the service of the animal still presents its vision of apparent good; and between these visions of good essential and good apparent, the soul of man is still in distress. In this sense the race of man is still sold under sin. Moral ignorance, perversity, misery, continue to be the deepest and darkest woes in human history. The only adequate name for man's world is tragedy. The theology that would save itself from shallowness and contempt must renew its vision of sin. Old definitions may be inadequate, old derivations may be antiquated, ancient treatises on original sin may have become mere black mythologies; still, between the soul and the eternal good stand the terrible forms of human ignorance, perversity, weakness, and woe. Into this tragic world of man ancient thinkers looked with profound vision; that vision must be renewed by the thinkers of this modern time who would know what man is and what he needs in order that he may become what it is in him to be.

The judgment of the Eternal God is essential to a living and militant faith. All kinds of behavior cannot be equally pleasing to God, if He is a being of moral discrimination, nor can any soul fall outside the circle of his judgment if every soul is of infinite consequence. The sense of the judgment of God issues in two feelings, one of awe in the presence of the final test of character, the other of hope that the soul in its evil habit should be of concern to the Infinite. Here the ideal of the saint is renewed; here the hope of the sinner is revived; here in both saint and sinner the consciousness of the infinite dignity of human life is wrought into new intensity and majesty. So long as men believe that the world is under the judgment of God, so long will awe and hope, and the sense of the high import of man's life, continue in the earth. If faith would be permanent, it must include belief in the eternal righteous judgment of God.

Redemption is a word for which we in

this day have little fondness. In so far as this means a revolt from ancient ideas about the moral distress of men, it is justifiable; in so far as it signifies that we belong to the respectable and comfortable class in society, secure in our moral conceit, it is not creditable. Redemption has meant deliverance, deliverance of man from his distress by the Almighty help of God; and in Christianity it has signified the same thing through the career of Jesus Christ and his servants. If there be no redemption, there can be in our theology no principle of it. If there be no redemption, the world still waits for the advent of its supreme helper.

Under new names the old principle of redemption is in fact more widely accepted and more efficiently used to-day than at any time since the apostolic age. Our optimism is nothing but our confidence in the coming deliverance of man. Our enthusiasm for education, missions, social service, pure politics, good government,

true religion, and a hundred aspects of the Christian ideal, is at heart a new confession of confidence in the great idea of redemption. We are seizing an old idea, delivering it from its mythological setting, clearing it of its æonian narrowness, translating it into a richer and vaster conception, and making it the final platform upon which as servants of the ideal we take our stand. And with these four beliefs — sovereignty, sin, judgment, redemption — there goes that in the permanence of the human soul. This belief is to-day, in the great centers of intellectual life, in many cases, timid, apologetic, hypothetic. A profounder faith in God, as the infinite lover of men and a deeper life in his love, will restore this great belief. It is bound up with the consciousness of the moral dignity of men; while that lasts, it cannot perish; when that waxes in vigor, it will return in power. The mystery of the enswathement of the human spirit in flesh is great. It has been obvious to the thinker

since thought began. It has been dwelt upon with peculiar intensity, sometimes with exclusive attention, during the last two generations of thinkers. The deeper mystery of the enswathement of the human spirit in God has faded from the consciousness of the time. It is this mystery that contains the key to the other; as Emerson sang:

"Lost in God, in Godhead found!"

We may believe, therefore, that the New England theology will have this reproduction of its essential ideas, at least in the new evangelical creed of the future. The old five points of the Calvinistic divinity might not be able to recognize the image of themselves as reproduced in the new five points of the divinity of to-day; but it is not seldom thus in the preservation of continuity. The principle of inheritance is often obscured in that of variation, the law of parenthood is frequently lost in the advent of a fresh gift from God. It may prove to be the case that

the traditional theology has, in a general way, set a type from which the Christian mind as a whole will never depart. A few remarks concerning the possible forms of this persisting type may not unfittingly close this discussion.

IV

TYPES of thought fundamental in their nature endure. The Platonic type of idealism endures, the transcendental type, whether Plato is regarded as an adequate master of it or not. The Aristotelian type of idealism endures; the immanental type, that which finds in the Eternal the force that gives meaning and character to the world of fact, whether the method and conclusions of Aristotle are or are not looked upon as acceptable. Materialism has many forms, but the type endures. Mind is referred to that which is lower than itself; the highest in human experience is under the ultimate sovereignty of that which is lowest, and this again by an abyss out beyond the individual soul. This is the essence of materialism, and this way of reading the meaning of existence endures. Pure phenomenalism is a persistent type,

the type that regards our human world as a vagrant, mean or mighty, in the dark immensities by which it is surrounded. In the sphere of ethics we have epicureanism, ancient and modern; stoicism, old and new; Hellenism, with its matter and form in ideal synthesis; Christianity, with its temporal filled with the eternal spirit. For many generations, at least, there will continue to exist different types of theological thought. These different schools of thought will continue to be influenced by ideals widely unlike. If we should say that the common ideal of theology is to give to the reason an adequate account of the religious life of mankind, that life is itself smitten with multiplicity and contrast. For critical students there must be some one religion which shall commend itself as highest. For the equal student who is a thinker that one highest religion will issue an ideal in the light of which he will build his philosophy of the spiritual life of mankind. For a long time,

in the sphere of the philosophy of religion, as in other departments of the philosophy of human existence, we must endure multiplicity and contrast; we must seek to learn from them, and through this wider mutual understanding do something to bring on the day of ultimate simplicity and unity in the religious vision of the world.

Every form of theism is founded upon a humanistic interpretation of the universe. The human mind finds itself plus infinity in the universe. Matter is reduced to force, the ordered force is reduced to mind, the mind is the supreme spirit. Thus the cosmos melts, before the ardor of the theistic mood, into mind. And the same process takes place in the consideration of our human world, with a result infinitely richer. Intellect and character in man, moral experience in the societies of men, the moral order in the life of nations and races, the moral world in the history of mankind, terminate in the mind and conscience of the moral

Deity. In every case, therefore, whether justifiable or not is not now the question, theism is the interpretation of the universe in accordance with the principle of human personality. Theism is essentially and eternally humanism.

Varieties of this theistic humanism will continue to exist. The varieties will be of two kinds; those resulting from fundamental differences in method, and those resulting from different estimates of the historic expressions of the religious spirit. The New England divinity is at heart a variety of humanism. As a type it will endure; as a system of opinion, expressive of that type, it has passed away. From the new outlook which we have now attained, we see new reasons for this result. The humanism of the New England divinity had two fatal defects — one intellectual, the other moral. It used as its guiding principle governmental analogies; it lived and moved and had its being in civic relations; it read the character

of the Supreme Mind through these relations, with the inevitable result that God was for it a King, a moral Governor, and men were subjects under this King and Governor. This was the intellectual defect of the humanism. It was in no sense Christian in its humanistic principle. Jesus says, "Our Father who art in heaven"; He adds, "Thy kingdom come"; but the Divine Fatherhood is primary. The parental and filial relation in human life is for Jesus the supreme principle in the reading of the character of God. Jesus speaks of his Father's house. Here again the human home is used as the institution through which the eternal life in God is to be apprehended. The humanism of Jesus is parental and filial; it is essential and everlasting humanism. The humanism of the New England divinity is external, subordinate, temporal. This structural defect runs through the entire system; from the first under this defect the system was doomed.

The moral defect of the New England humanism lies in the terrible negative which it carries in its heart. God creates all; puts all in a world in which all will surely fall into sin; so regards sin that the sinner is doomed to eternal misery; and yet this same God elects to salvation and provides for the salvation of a part only of this lost race. Humanism here falls beneath the dignity of a good man. It justifies the retort of Father Taylor, the sailor preacher of Boston, to the Calvinistic preacher, "Your God stands for my devil." In such a conception of God there is no hint of Christianity; in attaining this conception of God the kind of humanism employed is surely not that found in the prayer of Jesus on the Cross, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." The New England divinity has perished, therefore, because it was a form of humanism wanting in depth and wanting in worth.

Still, the type of humanism which the

system served while it lived, endures, and is bound to endure. That type sets a high value upon certain kinds of spiritual experience; it also attempts to read the character of the Eternal, not through man the individual, but through man the social being; in other words, it is evangelical in its religious feeling and Trinitarian in its vision of God.

This type of humanism looks upon our world under the form of tragedy. Between good apparent and good essential the world is still in a profound sense a lost world; that is, it is lost to the Divine end and use of existence, and it is a world in which misery natural and moral abounds. The experience of Paul, when he cried, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death"; of Augustine in his bitter struggle against a sensual habit; of Luther in his horror in the presence of an apparently impossible moral ideal — is in less emphatic forms and in a general

way the experience of awakened men in a Christian community. The great need is moral deliverance, moral hope and peace. When men are delivered from this woe they naturally become, to their fellow men still in distress, apostles, missionaries, preachers, and servants of the gospel of deliverance. The center of the world is tragedy, and the new insights and the emancipations from old ideas are built round this center. The new vision of truth to which the descendants of the old creed have come may be the common heritage of the enlightened religious spirit; yet in their case a certain fervor, a unique feeling, a passion as of one living in a world of tragedy, pervades the vision and flushes its calm features into solemnity and hope.

I have said this feeling is evangelical; that is, it is formed with reference to the message and person of Jesus Christ. He occupies the center of the historic field. Theo-centric in conclusion, this feeling under reflection is

Christo-centric in its method of interpretation; the attachment to the person of Jesus as the bearer and doer of the Eternal gospel is ardent and profound. He is the way over which the seeking God and the seeking soul alike go, in the highest religious community; the way in which the seekers meet. The feeling for Jesus on the part of his first disciples is a continuous feeling; the definitions accompanying the feeling may change while the feeling endures. This profound feeling for Jesus is the emotional side of the type of faith, served, while it lived, by the New England divinity. Jesus was God's way toward man; He was man's way toward God; and thus there sprung up in the heart the feeling of the indispensableness of the Lord. This sense of his indispensableness issued in a unique state of the heart toward Him; and this state of the heart toward the indispensable Master is not weaker, but stronger, in the free descendants of the New England divines.

We turn now from the emotional aspect of the type to its philosophical principle. Here, for the sake of clearness, it must be said that there is but one mood toward the universe that is non-humanistic. That mood is the agnostic mood. It sees that man must use his own nature in the interpretation of the ultimate reality if he is to attain an interpretation of it, and this the agnostic spirit refuses to do. Every positive view of the universe is attained under the guidance of some aspect of the personality of man used as the principle of interpretation. Materialism, whether crass or refined, is finally the construction of a theory of the universe through the medium of the bodily life; the philosophy that sums up the character of the Infinite as unconscious force uses as interpreter one phase of the human personality — will — abstracted from intelligence. Theism reduces itself to two forms; the interpretation of God through man the individual, and the apprehension of God

through man the social being. The world of facts lies open to the scientific investigator; the world of religious feeling and character lies before the student of religion; the world of spiritual reality in Christianity is in the vision of the competent inquirer upon this branch of history. In each case facts have a determining influence in the selection of the special phase of the human personality to be employed as the principle of interpretation. Certain facts, such as the apparent sovereignty of the lower forces over the higher, appeal to the materialist; other facts, such as the seeming blind might and majesty of the cosmos and our human world, control the mind of the fatalist; other facts still, such as the indisputable evidence of purpose in the universe, compel the mind of the theist; and once again, there are orders of fact that incline the theist now toward Deism and then toward Trinitarianism. But the facts are impotent without the guiding principle; in

every case that is borrowed from the human personality. I repeat, therefore, that every form of theism is a form of humanism. The collapse of the New England divinity has left in power to the future the type of theism known as the Trinitarian type.

It must be admitted that the form of theism most popular to-day in all the churches is that gained through the use of man the individual. Preachers in all communions have in large numbers turned from Trinitarianism. It is not publicly denied or discarded; it is secretly confessed to have become no part of the working philosophy of religion. This mood will doubtless continue to prevail to some extent in all the churches. For certain minds the interpretation of the universe through man the individual is supremely attractive, because of its apparent simplicity, straightforwardness, freedom from contradiction, and from the heavy, although at times transfigured fogs, that forever lie on the seas of mysticism. What

is known as Arianism, and again what is known as Unitarianism, sets a distinct and persistent type of theism. It is well to recognize its principle of interpretation, its philosophical method, and its enduring fascinations for certain orders of mind. It is well to confess that it is one of two rival types of Christian theism, and that to-day it is winning increasing confidence and support. It should be added that this type of theism holds, inconsistently as it seems to me, that its God is love in his inmost essence, that it carries over into its Deity pretty much the same moral content that one finds in its great rival type. In my judgment this moral content does not belong to it, nor do I think it will remain permanently with the type, if it shall continue unchanged; but as matter of fact this moral richness is now there.

The type of theism inherited from the New England divinity is the Trinitarian type. It has not perished, as is sometimes

rashly imagined, in the passing of that system. It is imperishable because it is founded upon the richest and worthiest form of humanism. It is useless to say that the Trinity was invented to make room in the Godhead for Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit of whom He spoke. Perhaps this may be the literal truth; that it is not the essential truth I am persuaded. Even on the surface of the history it is plain that, while the new doctrine of God may have been mainly suggested by the supreme career in the Gospels, that doctrine is logically prior to Christianity, logically prior to historic humanity. Besides, no ancient theologian of the first rank makes room in the Godhead for Jesus; he simply discerns a unique association between Jesus and one phase of the Godhead — the Eternal Son, between whom and all men, because they are men, there is an intimate and abiding association. In recent centuries there is a cloud of confusion resting upon the doctrine of God and

the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Into this fog-bank I have sailed elsewhere, and I have no time for another excursion now.

What we are concerned with here is not primarily historic situations, but philosophical principles. The reasons why the Trinity has been abandoned so largely in all communions of Christian faith are mainly two: superficiality in thought, and inability to grasp the principle at work in the entire history of Trinitarianism. Perhaps the two reasons should be reduced to one. If Trinitarianism were seen to be — what it unquestionably is — the result, in theistic belief, of the use of man the social being as the guide to the being of God, it could not appear to be the sanctified nonsense which it undoubtedly seems to be to many men to-day. Man by himself is no man. The individual is neither parent, nor child, nor lover, nor friend. The individual man is no man. Social man is the being we know, and social man, with his dower of love and his

burning moral idealism, is the being whose ground we seek in the Eternal. If the Eternal is a bare individual, it is an impenetrable mystery how He can be a moral being; and we are inclined to conclude with Aristotle, that morality, except in the form of intellectual integrity, is foreign to the nature of God. If the Eternal is a pure everlasting egoist, again it passes understanding how He can be represented in an altruistic humanity. That the Deity has the power to create forms of life different from his own, the world of life may be held to prove. Still, in every case there is fundamental identity. The link between the nature of God and the world of matter is force; force being unmeaning save as a phase of will. The infinite variety in the forms of life are again one with God, in that he is the living God. When we come to man we have a being whose essential nature is love. If God does not answer to man here, He falls below the work of his hands. But love, so far as we

can see, is impossible except in a social being; if therefore God is lover in some mystic way, He must be social. The question is how to evolve from an egoistic Deity an altruistic humanity. To answer this question of the evolution of humanity is one of the fundamental problems of theism; it would seem to be a desperate problem for Deistic theism.

I am here simply stating a principle of faith; I am not arguing now for the truth of a doctrine. The point is that the Trinitarian type of theism has survived the collapse of the old divinity; it will continue to survive because it is founded on a distinctive conception of man employed as a guide to the being of God. And it should be said, in simple justice to this type, and all the more because its friends seem to be few, and these few appear to sit most of the time under the shadow of fear, that the less we think of man the mere individual, the less disposed shall we be to rest in the form of theism to

which it leads; that the more we regard man as essentially a social being, the more inclined shall we be to trust the form of theism toward which it points.

The high contention, therefore, between the Unitarian and Trinitarian types of theism is not ended. It is only at its clear beginning. So far as it has been a contention in enmity, it has had its dismal day. The sooner this phase of the debate is utterly transcended, the better it will be for the cause of truth and character. A nobler debate now opens, a debate without which the intellect loses half its vigilance and vigor, the struggle in equal honor and utter freedom between the two types of theism. In this invigorating and honorable contest the writer stands in the line of descent from the New England divines. His theism is social theism; he is an out-and-out Trinitarian; at the same time he is moved to confess that he does not find himself in a multitude that no man can number.

Humanism as a philosophical principle covers both varieties of theism, and theism is after all the sovereign interest of religion. That theism is at heart humanism may be said to be a new insight. That it is not absolutely new the famous remark of Xenocrates, about the way in which animals would construe the universe if they were in a position to construe it, clearly shows. Still this form of thought, in its complete self-consciousness, is essentially new. When we construe the Eternal by the human we take the risk of faith. We may be mistaken, yet our mistake is a tribute to the Eternal. We judge Him by our best, and add thereto infinity. Humanism is our greatest word because it covers the greatest fact that we know — the phenomenal world of man. This phenomenal world is our surest path to the Eternal. We have no means of getting at what is except through what appears; and the highest appearance is the highest revelation of the hidden reality. Contempt

for man's world is contempt for the world of the highest man, Jesus of Nazareth, and contempt for his world is contempt for the Eternal, if the Eternal has equal worth. The phenomenal world is all that we have; nor is it a world isolated, vagrant, desolate. The Eternal is its refuge, and underneath it are the everlasting arms.

THE END

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